

WHAT DOES DISCIPLESHIP REQUIRE OF ME?

Read Luke 14:15-35

It is not some hidden secret or fine print in God's Word what it means to be a disciple of Christ. The picture being developed in regards to Christ's disciples has been quite clear up to now. However, how many are like the Pharisee in Luke 14:15 who think and say, "How blessed and fortunate is the one who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God?" In his mind, he had already determined that he would receive the invitation and just show up. However, Jesus goes on to clarify his thinking and assumptions. It's not in fine print, but very clear and we would be wise not to ignore it if we want to be a participant. Actually, Jesus' clarification is a further explanation of what a disciple/follower of Christ is and does. Let's take a look at it from this perspective as recorded in Luke 14.



THE INITIAL INVITATION: (Verses 16-23)

We see that many were invited. Even though Christ was referring to the Jews in this context, it can also relate to each of us as well (for the later invitation was extended to the Gentiles also).

The first call we all must respond to is the provision of salvation which God has made. In this particular instance, one by one they began to make excuses which appeared valid. They were either putting it off to a more convenient time or they just weren't interested. They were basically saying that "my life (as it is right now) is more important."

Question: Have you responded to that first call?

It is a fact that as His servants go out with the invitation, there will be those who reject it. If you have gone out to extend the invitation of the Master, you may have already encountered this. The rejection of His invitation not only saddens Him but also angers Him (as seen in verse 21).



THE NEXT STEP: THOSE WHO DO COME:

In verse 25, the description of the crowds that followed Him was categorized as huge. The reasons for following Him were most likely many just as it is today (probably for what He could do for them rather than who He was). In this case, He turned to them and very clearly let them know if they really wanted to follow Him, it would not be according to their way but must be according to His way. The timing of this statement is important as He was taking His final journey to Jerusalem to die upon the cross. He was walking out and toward what He has asked for each of us to do as well. Once we begin to follow and continue following, at some point He will turn to us and present the next step in our willingness to continue. It is our choice to respond to that commitment.

Question: Have you been faced with that decision in your life? How have you responded?

Jesus went on to explain (by an analogy) what it meant to only proceed so far and not go all the way. When we accept His invitation and come to salvation, we are beginning to lay a foundation just as the builder of a farm building in His parable. He laid the foundation but in order to finish, he needed to sit down and consider the cost (verses 28-30). The question Jesus proposes was are we going to leave what we have started half completed and in considering the cost say, "We just don't have what is needed to complete the process?" As you consider what has been started,

The question is: Have you been considering the cost? What is it in your life, what are those things that prevent your further commitment to the building process proceeding?



THE MEANING OF THE COST:

Jesus (in verse 26) told the crowd following Him that anyone taking on the role of a disciple must hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters and even your own life. Otherwise, they cannot be His disciple. The word "hate" does not mean to despise. It means that everyone else in our lives, we are to have the attitude of indifference to or relative disregard for them in comparison

with our attitude toward Him. This does not speak of neglecting family responsibilities. God does not intend for anyone to negate that role.

Question: Are there other relationships in your life that get in the way of Christ being first (that are more important than spending time with Him)?



TAKING UP YOUR CROSS:

Just as Jesus took up His cross to die for us, we must persevere in taking up our cross and begin to die to those things which keep us from surrendering all to follow Him. In Luke 5:11, we see that these disciples ran their boats on shore and left everything to follow Him. Their "boats" speak of what they were involved in every day of their lives. Those boats occupied all their time. It was their life and what they were about. They identified with that. However, they left it all because they saw and desired something that was far greater than the life they were living. They wanted to identify with someone who would bring more meaning than their "boats" did. They did not understand totally what it meant for each of them individually and they didn't see the whole picture of what lie ahead. All they knew was the One Who was calling had something more than what they had. The bottom line is that we must have enough of that foundation laid that we know we love Him and we are beginning that love growing relationship which means more than any property, any friend or whatever we possess and we are willing to give it all up if that would be required of us. The One we desire (Christ) has much more than we ever had before or could have on our own and we desire to pattern our lives after Him.

Question: Where are you in that love relationship? Do you desire to follow Him no matter the cost? Are you willing to continue following Him to "Jerusalem?" Are you willing to die to all?